[ME] New TV Broadcasting Frequencies Allocated

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Daniela Seferovic and Vojislav Raonic
KRUG Communications & Media, Montenegro

The Council of the Agency for Electronic Communications and Postal Services decided to allocate all requested broadcasting frequencies to Vijesti television, after a two-year bureaucratic proceeding during which the TV station operated and broadcast its signal through cable operators. The available frequencies have been distributed to other interested broadcasters in Montenegro, too, thus ending the two-year vacuum in the needs and supply in the Montenegrin media market.

Apart from Vijesti television which received all requested frequencies, one of seven was awarded to Television Pink Montenegro. Bidders had a 15-day period for complaints. The director of Vijesti television stated that the outcome was expected but also that he remained cautious until the equipment was placed on the transmitters, since there were still several procedures to be completed where further procrastination was possible.

The process of the allocation of radio frequencies was blocked for more than two years due to legal changes and Vijesti television suffered the greatest damage in this. The conditions for the realisation of a new public call for the allocation of radio frequencies were fulfilled in October 2009 when amendments to the Law on Electronic Communications came into force identifying the Agency for Electronic Communications as the eligible body for the distribution of frequencies.

Up to that point, the regulatory body was the Broadcasting Agency, which according to the new legislation remains in charge of the programme content of Montenegrin broadcasters.

Despite the initiatives with the Broadcasting Agency to take steps to provide possibilities for obtaining the necessary earth-link frequencies which existed in practice since Fox TV left Montenegro and returned its frequency in 2008, this did not happen. The adoption of the new Law on Electronic Communications in August 2008 left a legal void regarding the jurisdiction of these issues between the existing regulatory Broadcasting Agency and the newly-founded Agency for Electronic Communications and Postal Services. The solution was found only in October 2009 when the Law was amended.

The Council of the Broadcasting Agency gave its approval for the initiation of the invitation for tenders for the radio frequencies in November 2009 and immediately afterwards the public call was issued. The final decision came on 27

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A certain degree of legal ambiguity still exists in the regulation of the broadcasting sector. The Council of the Broadcasting Agency complains that its function as regulator for the programme content can not be fully defined until the adoption of the Law on Electronic Media which would - alongside the Law on Electronic Communications - legally round up the broadcasting sector in Montenegro.

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